



Legislation Text

File #: 2020-0251, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Water Agency
Staff Name and Phone Number: Susanne Oliver 524-1155
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Sonoma Water Licensed Land Surveyor

Recommended Action:

Adopt a resolution effective April 21, 2020 to add one (1) full-time equivalent Licensed Land Surveyor in the Survey and Right of Way Section of the Sonoma Water Engineering and Resource Planning Division to meet ongoing and increasing survey and right of way workload demands, to include oversight and supervision of staff involved in daily survey production work.

Executive Summary:

The Survey and Right of Way Section of the Engineering and Resource Planning Division of Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) provide integrated Land Surveying and Right of Way services in support of the Sonoma Water Capital Improvement Program, ongoing operations and maintenance, and a variety of critical monitoring, mitigation, and restoration initiatives including the Biological Opinion, response and recovery efforts connected with flooding, and response and recovery efforts related to wildfire events.

The Survey and Right of Way Section does not have adequate resources to meet current and projected demands for land surveying/mapping support and services. In addition to ongoing operational needs, the recent wildfire activity has created increased demand and urgency for survey and right of way support to document, track, and monitor sedimentation deposition and flows, erosion streams, and detention basins/reservoirs.

Adding 1.0 full-time equivalent Licensed Land Surveyor (Land Surveyor) to the Engineering Division of Sonoma Water will enable the Survey and Right of Way Section of the Division to meet ongoing and increasing survey and right of way workload demands, including oversight and supervision of staff involved in daily survey production work.

Sonoma County Human Resources has reviewed this request and concurs with the recommendation.

Discussion:

Under the current staffing model, the Water Agency Land Surveyor (WA Land Surveyor) is professionally responsible for all land surveying produced by the section, for managing and coordinating the work of four Engineering Technicians and Extra Help hired during peak production demand, and for managing Right of Way personnel and projects supporting the Sonoma Water's Capital Improvement Program and other initiatives.

State law requires that land surveying and some mapping services commonly requested of the Section be performed under the responsible charge of a licensed Professional Land Surveyor qualified and registered to practice land surveying by the State Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors (B&P Code Sec/. 8700 et. Seq.). Currently the WA Land Surveyor is the only employee of Sonoma Water licensed to direct, stamp and sign off on land surveys and required mapping products and services provided by the section.

The volume of services and level of support required from the Survey and Right of Way Sections is more than the current WA Land Surveyor can successfully supervise, manage and perform. The addition of 1.0 full-time equivalent Land Surveyor with the ability to supervise and direct technical survey staff will enable Sonoma Water to address ongoing demand for surveying and mapping services, address ongoing workload and efficiency issues, provide personnel resources required to effectively address timing demands for critical and time sensitive projects, and address an enormous backlog of survey and mapping services needed to support right of way acquisition activities.

Workload/volume

Presently, there are in excess of ninety (90) active right of way/real estate transactions in process in the Sonoma Water Survey and Right of Way Sections. This has been the consistent workload volume for the past 10 years and is expected to continue, based on Sonoma Water's current Capital Projects Plan and operational trends.

The majority of these active transactions have critical timelines requiring status monitoring, adaptive management and crisis aversion intervention by the Water Agency Land Surveyor to stay on track. Managing this body of work consumes the majority of the Water Agency Land Surveyor focus, time and resources, not leaving sufficient time to dedicate to the day-to-day supervision and management of technical staff, or to the production of the Land Surveying and mapping in support of Property/Right of Way acquisition work. It is not feasible from a capacity standpoint for the Water Agency Land Surveyor to effectively manage both of these areas of responsibility and meet current project demand. This has had a compounding effect on workload backlog. At present Sonoma Water is six months to one year behind on critical project milestones on a number of active right of way acquisition processes.

Efficiency

The current staffing of the section coupled with the sustained high-level of workload prevents the Water Agency Land Surveyor from dedicating the requisite attention and resources to any given set of tasks or needs. The addition of 1.0 full-time equivalent Land Surveyor will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the section by providing a professional licensed resource to address production demands while also assisting with supervision of staff. The new position will take responsibility for the day-to-day direction and supervision of technical staff, enabling the Water Agency Land Surveyor to provide strategic oversight to the Survey and Right of Way Section and focus attention, energy and subject matter expertise on more complex issues, projects and demands required of the section.

Due to the backlog of work and the continuing demands on this section, Sonoma Water has prioritized this add as a critical need that is best met with in-house staff resources. The majority of the products and services needed for surveying, mapping, and right of way acquisition require constant collaboration between licensed survey staff, Right of Way staff, Engineering, Environmental Resources, Operations and Maintenance staff,

Government and Community Affairs, County Counsel, and Sonoma Water Senior Management. The interaction and activities include sensitive and often confidential negotiations and business matters involving Attorney-client privileged content, or issues that are delicate from a political/public relations perspective. It is not practical from a collaboration, coordination or management perspective, nor is it financially feasible, or a best practice in terms of protecting proprietary information, to use external contract services.

Consequences of not adding the position

1. The Survey and Right of Way Section will not meet Capital Projects Plan milestones and timelines for current projects, many of which have funding and regulatory completion mandates. Failure to meet these will result in significant financial and punitive consequences.
2. Projects needed to address critical infrastructure and systems vulnerabilities will not move forward.
3. Activities required by the Biological Opinion related to Dry Creek and the main stem of the Russian River including a mandate to enhance habitat for listed salmonid species will likely not get completed within the mandated timeline.
4. Acquisition of real property/right of way from more than thirty property (30) owners needed to replace more than eight miles of Sewer Trunk Main in Sonoma Valley by November 2021 under the order of the Water Regional Quality Control Board due to sewer overflows/spills will not be attainable.
5. Impact on succession planning. The current Water Agency Land Surveyor is nearing retirement, and Sonoma Water will not have the opportunity to develop staff and pass on institutional knowledge critical to the effective management and leadership of the Survey and Right of Way Sections.

The Licensed Land Surveyor will be responsible for the following:

- 1) Under direction of the Water Agency Surveyor coordinate, direct, and stamp, sign and otherwise be professionally responsible for surveying and mapping products produced by the Water Agency Engineering Technicians assigned to the Survey and Right of Way Sections.
- 2) Outline work plans, prepare materials, and implement quality control standards needed to meet validity requirements of the work product and services to be provided.
- 3) Determine safety equipment, requirements and protocol necessary for field survey operations, ensure appropriate safety equipment is available and what lane closure or traffic detours may be required for field survey operations, and coordinate activities and secure permits as required.
- 4) Direct and confer with assigned survey personnel as needed to dispatch field crews for the collection of measurements, observations, imagery, field notes and evidence.
- 5) Conduct onsite safety briefings and tailgate meetings with field crews.
- 6) Review work produced by technical staff to assure quality and confirm resulting products meet the services requested.
- 7) Conduct research, prepare calculations, maps, plats, surveys, legal descriptions and other instruments required in connection with requested products and services.
Ensure Software/Firmware/Computer Applications and data transfer media for Digital and Optical Survey Instrumentation, GPS and Data Collection Equipment are licensed and updated.

Prior Board Actions:

N/A

FISCAL SUMMARY

| Expenditures | FY 19-20 Adopted | FY20-21 Projected | FY 21-22 Projected |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | | |

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|------------------------------------|----------|------------------|------------------|
| Budgeted Expenses | 0 | \$186,666 | \$192,266 |
| Additional Appropriation Requested | | | |
| Total Expenditures | 0 | \$186,666 | \$192,266 |
| Funding Sources | | | |
| General Fund/WA GF | | \$186,666 | \$192,266 |
| State/Federal | | | |
| Fees/Other | | | |
| Use of Fund Balance | | | |
| Contingencies | | | |
| Total Sources | 0 | \$186,666 | \$192,266 |

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Salary and benefits are budgeted in the General Fund which is funded through property tax revenue and grants. The General Fund is reimbursed by our enterprise funds through the overhead rate using project costing. Sonoma Water's cost accounting system allocates labor costs to Sonoma Water projects specific to its enterprise funds. Adding a 1.0 full-time equivalent Licensed Land Surveyor represents an annual increase in labor costs of \$181,229. For FY 2020/2021 the net increase for salary and benefits will be \$186,666 and \$192,266 for FY 2021/2022 assuming a 3% cost-of-living adjustment each year. FY 2020/2021 and FY 2021/2022 appropriations will be budgeted in these fiscal years.

| Staffing Impacts: | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Position Title (Payroll Classification) | Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step) | Additions (Number) | Deletions (Number) |
| Licensed Land Surveyor | \$7767.57 - \$9439.00 | +1 | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

If approved, this request will increase Sonoma Water's allocation tables as follows:
 Licensed Land Surveyor from 0 allocations to 1 allocation.

Attachments:

(1) Resolution

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None